

DAVID P. BOBZIEN JR.
ASSEMBLYMAN
District No. 24



CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEES:

Chair
Education

Member
Natural Resources,
Agriculture, and Mining
Ways and Means

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Nevada Assembly

SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION
April 19, 2011

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Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal Project
ATTN: Scott Florence, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Arizona Strip District Office
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790-6714

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE

APR 22 2011

Dear Mr. Florence:

I am writing you to urge the Bureau of Land Management to issue a 20 year withdrawal of approximately one million acres of National Forest System lands and public lands in the region surrounding the Grand Canyon from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872. The Grand Canyon is one of our nation's greatest natural treasures, and it is imperative that we protect it as well as the principal water source for millions of southern Nevadans, the Colorado River.

As you know, due to the rising prices of uranium, the number of hard-rock mining claim has increased exponentially in the West. There are 8,500 mining claims currently on file, up from 100 claims in January of 2003, and approximately 1,100 mining claims are within 5 miles of the Grand Canyon, threatening the region's landscape, wildlife and delicate ecosystem.

The Grand Canyon National Park region is exposed to high risks of uranium and toxic chemical contamination of both surface and ground water, which threaten not only the fish and wildlife but the 27 million people in Nevada and California who draw their water from the Colorado River. Ninety percent of southern Nevada's drinking water is drawn from the Colorado River water system and contamination poses an unacceptable risk to public health and would endanger the Southwest's tourism economy.

Thank you for implementing the two-year moratorium on uranium exploration and mining in July of 2009. I urge you to implement a long-term 20 year withdrawal of further mining claims to protect our country's national treasure and the foremost water source for millions of Nevadans. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Bobzien", written over a horizontal line.

David Bobzien
Assemblyman, Nevada District 24

Richard A
Spotts/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI
04/22/2011 09:36 AM

To Trudy C Law/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM
cc
bcc
Subject FYI - Officials support uranium mining

FYI and for the AR.

----- Forwarded by Richard A Spotts/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI on 04/22/2011 09:35 AM -----



Rachel
Tueller/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI
04/22/2011 09:30 AM

To Scott R Florence/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Dennis A
Sylvia/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Lorraine M
Christian/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Pamela
McAlpin/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Rosie
Pepito/LAME/NPS@NPS, Linda R
Price/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Mark D
Rosenthal/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Gloria B
Benson/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Richard A
Spotts/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM
cc Joan B Losacco/AZSO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Deborah
Stevens/AZSO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Carrie
Templin/AZSO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Rody
Cox/ASFO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Verl J
Garrett/AZSO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM, Chris
Horyza/AZSO/AZ/BLM/DOI@BLM

Subject

http://saintgeorgespectrum.ut.newsmemory.com/?token=b00e70b280c20716144a7638db2c72e9_7549_111111&

The Spectrum & Daily News Friday April 22, 2011 Pg. A1 Cover Officials support uranium mining

By David DeMille

ddemille@thespectrum.com

ST. GEORGE — Washington County officials are calling for the federal government to re-open areas around the Grand Canyon for uranium mining.

Fresh off a tour of mines in northern Arizona, Washington County commissioners say the practice doesn't present an environmental danger and could bring billions of dollars to the local economy if the government doesn't follow through on a proposal to ban new claims for the next 20 years.

"I wish people could come out and see for themselves," Commissioner Alan Gardner said, indicating he saw a re-claimed mining site on the tour that was impossible to identify as a former mine. "They'd see that it's not a big deal."

Federal officials are considering a ban on more than 1 million acres of public land that a government report indicates may contain 326 million pounds of uranium. The officials are concerned about potential harm to land, water, people and wildlife.

Government officials started receiving more than 10,000 claims each year in 2007 and 2008. U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar called for a two-year halt to new claims in the region in 2009 to give federal agencies time to

investigate the

See URANIUM, Page [A5](#)



People overlook the north rim of the Grand Canyon in 2010. SAMANTHA CLEMENS / THE SPECTRUM

Article Continued Below



[See URANIUM on Page A05](#)

Continued from A1

environmental impacts of mining. That moratorium expires July 21, but a new mining ban could come out of the process prior to that date.

Uranium mining has a notorious past for some — high incidences of cancer were found among Navajos who worked in uranium mines in the 1950s, for example — and there are concerns that mining could result in contamination of water sources.

A U.S. Geological Survey report last year found dissolved uranium concentrations higher than federal limits at 15 springs and five wells near ore bodies in the area being considered. The elevated levels could have come from natural processes, mining or a combination of both, according to the report.

"There's nothing modern about it," said Roger Clark, energy program director for the Grand Canyon Trust. "It's hard rock mining."

Those in the mining industry contend that mining poses no potential danger, though, thanks to better technology and an exhaustive effort to improve the process.

They also say mining could have huge financial benefits for surrounding areas. There is a large market for uranium, with the price hovering near \$60 per pound this year. It only dropped slightly to \$57 per pound in the wake of the accident at Japan's Fukushima 1 nuclear plant after an earthquake and tsunami struck the region in March.

In a presentation before local officials, Gene Spearing, vice president of exploration with Quaterra Resources, said new instruments make it easier for miners to find the uranium and that mining activity could funnel \$29.4 billion to surrounding economies over the next 40 years.

Past mining operations brought large numbers of residents to Kanab and nearby Fredonia, Ariz. As miners spend money on everything from parts to oil to services, that impact will spread to Washington County, which is the largest nearby community, said Pamela Hill, a member of the American Clean Energy Resources Trust, a coalition of mining companies.

The BLM had received 181,839 comments on the subject as of April 15. While the majority are either form letters or nonpertinent, about 530 are considered unique letters with substantive comments that the agencies will need to evaluate, said Chris Horyza, project manager with the BLM.

"Those are going to require some research on our part to respond to," Horyza said. "How long that takes, I honestly can't tell you."

Horyza said the majority of letters received thus far are in favor of the proposed 20-year stoppage.

Rachel Tueller
Public Affairs Officer
Arizona Strip District Office
Bureau of Land Management
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monsensgu@infowest.com
04/25/2011 12:20 AM

To <utsgmail@blm.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on Withdrawal Proposal on Mining near Grand Canyon

Attention BLM Arizona Strip District regarding Public Comments on AZ Mining on Public Lands:

As a frequent visitor to N. Rim of the Grand Canyon and the Arizona Strip area, I urge the BLM to oppose uranium mining on the public lands adjacent to the Grand Canyon and I urge the BLM to support a full protection of the Grand Canyon watershed. Let us not forget the lessons (if any) learned from the 1998 bankruptcy of Atlas Minerals Corporation, the Moab uranium mill that operated from 1956 to 1984 and left behind contaminated soils leaching ammonia and radioactive materials into the groundwater. **Taxpayers are now paying for the Superfund cleanup that is estimated to cost \$970 million and will not be completed until 2025** (per Moab UMTRA Project Report February 2011). It only takes one irresponsible mining company among the approximately 10,600 mining claims filed within the proposed area (The number of claims I quote is from High Country News accessed online 4/24/11.) to create a huge public liability and future cleanup cost we will not be able to pay.

It only takes one irresponsible mining operator to destroy natural resources and contaminate the ground water. Let us stick to coal and natural gas and avoid jumping into uranium where the cost of cleanup is unpredictable and extremely high and the future damage can be enormous. As with many examples in the past, mining companies are notorious for reaping profits, spending all their assets, and leaving the polluted mining tailings and scarred earth destruction behind for the government and the rest of us to clean up.

Additionally, with nearly 5 million annual visitors to Grand Canyon and 100,000 to the North Rim (accessed through Utah), the light footprint of tourism brings in millions of dollars of outside revenues to local businesses without incurring the risk of having to cleanup the damaged landscape later. With fewer Federal dollars available to handle today's superfund cleanups let alone tomorrow's potential cleanups, it would be fiscally irresponsible for the U.S. government to expose itself to the risk of creating another superfund cleanup in the Grand Canyon area.

Tourism is extremely important to the Utah economy. The beauty of Utah as a tourist destination can be protected only if our elected and appointed officials make decisions based on what is best for the country and citizens in the long term. Short term profits are not worth the destruction of a priceless natural landscape that will be scarred with access mining roads, drained of the limited water resources, and face possible (and very real) long-lasting pollution from radioactive tailings and ammonia byproducts from uranium mining.

I urge you to carefully consider the cost/benefit relationship of opening the public lands near the Grand Canyon to uranium mining. I encourage you and other officials to protect our natural

tourist resources and not risk incurring future mining cleanup costs. Let us learn from the Moab example; do not open public lands in the Grand Canyon area to uranium mining because the liability of cleanup is too great and the damage to the landscape will be irreversible.

Thank you.

Karen Monsen

St. George, UT

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DISTRICT 24



Arizona House of Representatives
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE AND
WATER,
CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS

JOINT LEGISLATIVE
BUDGET COMMITTEE

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE
APR 22 2011

April 7, 2011

Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Proposed Withdrawal of 1.1 million acres on the
Arizona Strip of the Colorado Plateau

Dear Secretary Salazar,

You are in receipt of Governor Janice Brewer's letter of October 9, 2009 requesting that you refrain from withdrawing these Arizona and Federal lands from multiple use including mining.

This withdrawal concerns ourselves. We are charged with the responsibility of the operation of our great state. Arizona has plans for both these state lands and our federal lands that include mining the uranium resource located within the withdrawal area. Our plan for orderly and responsible development of our resource will provide jobs for our people, revenues for our schools and communities of which are, as you are aware, of grave concern to us and the people of Arizona.

We would like to point out that your recent EIS found evidence that uranium mining was not a concern with regards to polluting the waters of the Colorado River.

Our country needs the energy this resource will provide and is an integral part of the solution of attaining energy independence from foreign nations including Russia who has and continues to provide a large amount of uranium that we rely on to generate our electricity and fuel our naval ships.

Sincerely,

John Willmore

Carl Lee

RJ/tf

Nancy McLean

Mr M. P. C.

Michael H. Vignot

Rick Hay

Brenda Burton

Lyndal M. M.

David Burton

Alce

For

Terri Proulx

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We would like to point out that your recent EIS found evidence that uranium mining was not a concern with regards to polluting the waters of the Colorado River.

This resource, as Governor Brewer pointed out , as determined by the USGS is 42% of the available uranium in the United States as well as the richest and easiest to mine with little or no degradation to our environment.

Our country needs the energy this resource will provide and is an integral part of the solution of attaining energy independence from foreign nations including Russia who has and continues to provide a large amount of uranium that we rely on to generate our electricity and fuel our naval ships.

We urge you to refrain from taking these lands from our state, coordinate with us and help us pursue our plan for orderly development of this much needed resource.

Sincerely,

Dail Griffin

Al Melvin

John B. Melvin

Sylvia Allen

Lori R. Allen

Steve R. Allen

Steve R. Allen

RON GOULD

Wm. J. Jantz

cc: Scott Florence, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management

Enclosure: Governor Janice Brewer letter of October 9, 2009

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARIZONA

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

October 30, 2009

Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Notice of Proposed Withdrawal

Dear Secretary Salazar:

On behalf of the State of Arizona, I am pleased to take this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed withdrawal of 993,549 acres of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest System lands in northern Arizona. The stated purpose of the Department of the Interior's proposed withdrawal of these lands is "to protect the Grand Canyon watershed from adverse effects of locatable hardrock mineral exploration and mining." This withdrawal is unnecessary to protect the Grand Canyon region and Colorado River, and in many ways would have an adverse impact on the State of Arizona. As a steward of Arizona's tremendous natural resources, economic well being, and the public trust, I object to this proposal, and request that the Department take action to remove the proposed burdensome restrictions on federal and state lands in the Northern Arizona Uranium District.

Uranium mining exploration and production operations already exist on the Colorado Plateau and in the Grand Canyon region. Various federal and state laws heavily regulate these mining operations. Additionally, only a small fraction of the land is impacted by these activities.

Existing Federal law requires mining operations to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act and various rules, regulations and policies established by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. These regulations require all mining activities on federal lands minimize, prevent or mitigate adverse environmental impacts, and a plan of operations subject to the NEPA process, for any operation likely to cause a significant disturbance.

Moreover, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) enforces federal and state laws protecting public health and the environment. ADEQ ensures air and water quality permits

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are obtained prior to starting mining operations to ensure clean air and clean water in the Grand Canyon region and in the Colorado River. Together, these various safeguards protect the air, water, cultural resources, wilderness, and wildlife habitat in areas affected by mining operations.

In the Colorado Plateau region of northern Arizona that includes the proposed withdrawal area, ore extraction and production at existing uranium mines has minimal environmental impact on the surrounding land, water, and wildlife because of modern environmental laws. The uranium deposits in these breccia pipes are typically dry and located several hundred feet above the underlying aquifer. Mining of uranium ore in Arizona requires an Aquifer Protection Permit (APP) to ensure there are no adverse effects on the underlying aquifer. Further, since *in situ* mining of uranium is not planned or envisioned for northern Arizona deposits, the risk of contamination of underground water sources is significantly reduced. Finally, clean closure, which is required under the APP, involves returning the land to background radiation levels consistent with those naturally occurring in the area.

As you are aware, exploratory uranium activities do not involve extraction or transporting of uranium ore for processing. Exploratory activities create minimal impact to the land. Mining explorations frequently use existing roads, utilize a small drill pad, achieve zero discharge, drill small boreholes, return drillings to the borehole and reclaim the disturbed areas. Due to the limited activity and drilling material "containment", exploratory activities generate no discharge to waters of the United States or the state under the Clean Water Act because the operations typically contain all drill materials onsite. While not specifically regulated by Arizona's state APP Program, returning drill cuttings including drill fluids after exploration is consistent with ADEQ's general APP requirements. Even in full-scale uranium mining, due to the use of underground mining methods and the utilization of waste rock as backfill, the surface footprint is small, ranging from ten to twenty acres.

Most environmental concerns raised by the legacy of uranium mining in Arizona and the southwest United States are the result of activities that occurred prior to the existence of modern environmental laws and generally resulted from detonation, disposal, ore-processing (milling) and weapons manufacturing sites; activities not associated with modern uranium extraction. Even so, as is the case with the recently permitted Arizona uranium activities, further mitigation measures could be undertaken to address concerns raised during any permitted activities. ADEQ recently issued two permits with enforceable permit conditions including mine permeability testing and monitoring to ensure fluids are not conveyed out of the mine, ground water monitoring, mine water monitoring and financial assurances for clean closure.

Proposed uranium mining activities in northern Arizona are located completely outside of Grand Canyon National Park. Since most sites are far away from the National Park boundary, there is no expected impact on the quality of Park visitors' experiences. Wildlife would also be unaffected by mining operations. At existing uranium mines in northern Arizona, the mine site

Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Page 3 of 4
October 30, 2009

is completely fenced off so that no ground animal or human can enter the property without the knowledge of the workers or guards. Each mine only operates for less than 10 years, which time frame includes reclamation activities to restore the area for wildlife to inhabit.

As expressed in Arizona State Land Commissioner Maria Baier's September 24, 2009 letter to you, the state is also very concerned about Arizona State Trust land encompassed in the proposed closure area. Significant portions of the 85,673 acres of non-federal lands within the closure area are Arizona State Trust lands. Potential loss of mining royalties to the 13 public beneficiaries, the largest of which is K-12 education, from even a single breccia pipe on trust lands could range from \$1.5 to \$18.5 million.

In terms of the economic impacts of uranium mining activities on federal land in northern Arizona, we estimate that the industry will generate more than \$10 billion to the local economy over the life of these mines. This will include hundreds of high-paying jobs in a rural economy that desperately needs employment opportunities. We envision that local residents from nearby areas where unemployment rates remain far above the state and national averages will fill many of these jobs.

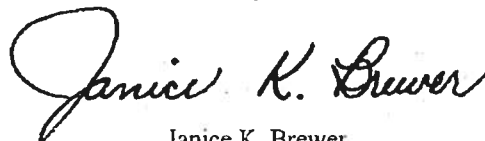
Finally, I must urge the Department to consider national security and energy independence as an additional basis to vacate its proposed withdrawal of lands for uranium mining. Arizona and the United States have a tremendous national security resource in northern Arizona. Although various types of uranium deposits occur within Arizona, breccia pipes in the Grand Canyon region contain the highest-grade uranium ore in the United States and some of the highest in the world. The United States imports over 90% of the needed uranium for nuclear-powered electrical energy production. A secure domestic supply of uranium is a crucial element for continued use of this energy source. According to the United States Geological Survey, the Arizona Strip holds 42% of the nation's estimated undiscovered uranium. Generally, nuclear energy is cheaper than coal and natural gas, and cleaner in that it doesn't contribute global warming gases to the atmosphere. To remove this source of energy forces our nation to rely more heavily on foreign nations to meet growing energy needs. Without this nuclear energy, we would be forced to look toward other sources of power that have a much higher carbon footprint and a detrimental impact on climate change.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the overwhelming evidence that responsible uranium mining can be both safe for public health and the environment and compatible with the Grand Canyon region and its watershed. This is an opportunity to provide access to one of the richest deposits of high-grade ore in the world while creating the smallest possible mining impact. Canceling the proposed withdrawal and allowing the market to provide this commodity will promote the economy both in Arizona and nationally; will fuel carbon-neutral nuclear power; and support energy independence in an environmentally safe and protective manner. The withdrawal proposal is overly broad and unnecessary because of the protections offered by state

Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Page 4 of 4
October 30, 2009

and federal laws that will ensure mining operations will be protective of the Grand Canyon region and the Colorado River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice K. Brewer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janice" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Brewer".

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

JB:MA:njw

cc: Scott Florence, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management